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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CIA STEINMEIER IRAQ-U.S. IRAQ-
SADDAM ENVIRONMENT CHECHNYA CHINA;BERLIN

- A. Lead Stories Summary
- B. (CIA) Secret Flights
- C. (Germany-U.S.) Steinmeier Visit, Reaction To CIA Flights
- D. (Iraq) Future U.S. Policy
- E. (Iraq) Saddam Trial
- F. (Environment) Montreal Summit
- G. (Chechnya) Elections

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H. (China) Toxic Chemical Spill

A. Lead Stories Summary

HEADLINES

"Warning Shots" Against Reform Of Federal System
(Frankfurter Allgemeine)

Dialogue with Islamic Neighbors In A Stalemate (Sueddeutsche
Zeitung)

Hospital Doctors Beginning Wave Of Strikes (Die Welt)

Deutsche Bahn's Move First Test For Merkel (Frankfurter
Rundschau)

Deutsche Bahn's Move To Hamburg Almost Certain
(Tagesspiegel)

First Conflict In Coalition Government (Berliner Zeitung)

Editorials focused on the meeting of EU states with Middle
East and Northern African Neighbors in Barcelona and the
trip of Foreign Minister Steinmeier to the United States.
ZDF-TV's early evening newscast heute and ARD-TV's early
evening newscast Tagesschau opened with stories on the
repercussions of the heavy snowfall in western Germany.

B. (CIA) Secret Flights

1. Claudia Venohr commented on regional radio station
Norddeutscher Rundfunk of Hamburg (11/26):

"Rumors are gaining ground that the CIA has maintained
secret prisons in Europe, which resembled torture centers..
This is an incredible suspicion, which, however, is not new.
But what about investigations at the highest political
level, for instance, launched by the European Commission?
Thus far, nothing.. U.S. airbases in Germany apparently
serve as loading stations for kidnapped and captured people.
Obviously international law on European ground is not worth
the paper on which it is written..

"In some European countries, including in Germany,
prosecutors are investigating the secret wheelings and
dealings of the CIA. This is courageous but will remain a
stab in the dark, since there is no political pressure.
That is why friendly letters at the diplomatic level will
not be enough. It would be scandalous to leave the

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protection and the granting of fundamental rights to ordinary prosecutors and judges, since their investigations would lead to nothing. But maybe this is also politically desirable, since the U.S. superpower is involved, irrespective of whether we have human rights or not."

2. "The CIA Airlift"

Nicolas Richter commented in center-left Sueddeutsche Zeitung of Munich (11/29):

"Extremism is the main feature of this kind of the war

on terror. Spies fly over anything that is annoying to them - the borders of countries, laws and decency. That is known from Guantanamo. Europeans are so outraged because they feel deceived by their great ally and its intelligence operations.. Of course, these renditions are born out of a dilemma. There is not enough evidence against many terror suspects to extradite them to the U.S. and take them to court in the usual way. They would not be impressed by a polite police interrogation, but criminal operations cannot close this security gap because the risks are greater than the benefits.. The U.S. administration has allowed the operations and must now bear responsibility. An independent investigation and compensation for the victims is the least we can expect from the White House. However, the performance of European governments is also embarrassing. The German government has never publicly supported its citizen el-Masri and the Italian government does not attack Washington but its own investigators, who publicized the Imam Omar case. The Berlin airlift earned the U.S. a great deal of sympathy, capital that was decisive to win the Cold War against an inhuman system. In the war on terror, the U.S. administration embarked on the failed strategy of its former enemy: cold repression."

3. Center-right General-Anzeiger of Bonn (11/29) judged:

"Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the United States was also confronted with the challenge to defend its own legal norms against the temptation for radicalization, i.e. to react to the brutality of terror with the civilized and moderate forces of democracy instead of answering barbarity with barbarity. The Bush administration failed in light of this challenge. Under the impression of the terror attacks it sacrificed elementary principles and norms. With such a reaction, a democratic nation is moving into the abyss."

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4. Centrist Leipziger Volkszeitung (11/29) noted:

"The U.S. policy towards Iraq, including the weak reasons to wage this war and the alleged CIA flights with captured Islamists and their stopovers in Germany, are rightfully causing irritation in Berlin. Thus far, the U.S. government has not given any answers. But this cannot be the last word among allies. An hasty assignment of blame is not useful either. Differentiation is necessary. If the CIA flies captured terror suspects for investigative reasons around the globe, then this can be in the interest of the entire West. But if these prisoners have no right to defend themselves in a court, then this contradicts legal principles like torture or unlimited imprisonment."

5. Centrist Westdeutsche Zeitung of Dsseldorf (11/29) argued:

"In the coming days, the 1,000th inmate on death row will be executed by state hangmen. If the United States were a European country, it could never become a member of the Council of Europe because of this. At the same time, the U.S. intelligence service is kidnapping people and allowing them to be tortured abroad. In order to do this, and this is especially brazen, it uses German infrastructure. Members of the German government, who accept this without raising any protest, would automatically turn into accomplices. To ignore this can lay the foundation for such crime."

C. (Germany-U.S.) Steinmeier Visit, Reaction To CIA Flights

1. "Silence Is Inappropriate"

Friedbert Meurer argued on national radio station Deutschlandfunk of Cologne (11/28):

"Chancellor Merkel should not be indifferent to the latest news on the CIA operations. The public in Germany will carefully observe her attitude to Washington, because her predecessor, Schröder, enjoyed the greatest public support in his opposition to the Iraq war. In the run-up to her Washington visit in January, Ms. Merkel would be well advised to strengthen the German top diplomat, Steinmeier, and to coordinate her policy with him.. It would be inappropriate for the German government to remain silent in

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Washington."

2. "New Tone, Same Content"

Michael Backfisch noted in business daily Handelsblatt of Duesseldorf (11/29):

"Will there be a new beginning in German-American relations? One can hear the sound of a new momentum in Washington and Berlin these days. The uproar over the secret CIA flights in several European countries and the public criticism cause transatlantic commotion, but it will not negatively affect today's courtesy call by Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier in Washington. Chancellor Merkel has already announced that she desires to boost relations with the U.S. and smaller EU countries. With that, she consciously distances herself from her predecessor's axis policy.. The content of the cooperation will not change under Merkel. The U.S. administration therefore desires to improve the atmosphere of German-American relations. Merkel enjoys a leap of faith because she did not distance herself from the U.S. during the Iraq war.. Because President Bush's foreign policy is under attack, he needs partners like Merkel. That is a opportunity to increase the significance of the German position in Washington."

3. "Steinmeier's New World"

Richard Meng wrote in left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau (11/29):

"One can see Steinmeier's courtesy call on the UN and the U.S. administration as a litmus test. The new man will get a first feeling for the diplomatic leeway, and the real prospect of multilateralism, which must remain Berlin's guideline because of the country's values and interests. Although the previous government was proud of its attempt to be a peaceful medium size power, Germans do not have a clear picture of Germany's role in the world, and why it should be important, not to mention Bundeswehr missions under UN mandate. The Black-Red commitment to continuity means that Berlin could remain a place that reacts to complicated international developments rationally and with long-term considerations."

4. "A New Beginning Is Expected"

Olivia Schoeller editorialized in left-of-center Berliner Zeitung (11/29):

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"The generational change from Schröder to Merkel and from Fischer to Steinmeier should establish a new foundation of German-American relations. The point of reference will no longer be the past but the present - an age of China's

rise, global epidemics and Jihad. Washington generally hopes that a more positive feeling will help find common interests.. Although it is unpleasant for the U.S. administration, Steinmeier cannot avoid mentioning the mysterious CIA flights with suspected terrorists on board on the way to secret torture camps. Steinmeier must seek clarification whether these flights passed through Frankfurt. Not just the German public demands this, but also the self-respect of the new government. However, even this tricky issue should not worsen the sentiment and the readiness on both sides to bring about a new beginning."

5. "Treatment Of Friends"

Bettina Gaus observed in leftist die tageszeitung of Berlin (11/29):

"Being in charge can sometimes help realize things. Some politicians from the CDU and CSU now say that Foreign Minister Steinmeier must mention the reports on CIA renditions and stopovers in Germany. If this approach would become commonplace in the CDU and CSU, which is not yet the case, it would be a first step towards a more realistic view on international relations. It would mean that political differences with powerful allies are possible, and that discussing them should not be seen as bad manners. That would be an achievement. In the last weeks, Angela Merkel gave the impression that relations with the U.S. are just about manners and not policy.. Of course, one can be more polite with friends, but sometimes they still hold different opinions after a nice talk. What do you do then?"

D. (Iraq) Future U.S. Policy

1. "Our War In Iraq"

Washington correspondent Matthias Rb filed the following front-page editorial in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/29):

"To whom 'belongs' the war in Iraq? First of all, and

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not only seen from a technical view, it belongs to U.S. President George W. Bush, for he as the supreme commander gave the order to invade the country. Irrespective of the outcome of this war, it will belong to Bush and it will characterize the legacy of the 43rd U.S. president. Nevertheless, it is alarming that he, as 'owner' of this war, is increasingly isolated. If it is to be accepted that the president of the United States is the leader of the free world that has repeatedly been threatened by radical ideologues, then this war in Iraq is a war of all of us. But even the majority of Americans no longer sees it that way..

"But because Iraq is today the main theater in the global war on radical Islamic terrorism and because the establishment of the rule of law is the best forward defense in this struggle, the war in Iraq must be 'Iraqized' and internationalized. That is why the plan is right to begin with the withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq in the 'year of fate' 2006, provided the administration and Congress unshakably stick to their commitment to supporting the Iraqi security forces in its struggle for the young democracy until the 'job is done.'. There can be no clear date for the [conclusion of this] enormous task in Iraq and no price can be too high because the defense of the principles of the rule of law are at issue, principles without which a fruitful life in the Middle East and the whole world cannot

happen.

"But an internationalization of the Iraq war is possible only if the leading power recovers from its damaged credibility in this comprehensive struggle. In this historically new conflict with an enemy who makes the killing of innocent people and the violation of civilian rules a principle against whom the instruments of deterrence and containment are unsuitable, one's own values, which we want to defend, must be staunchly clear. In this controversy over whether and how alleged terrorists are tortured or interrogated in a 'tough' manner, how long they can be imprisoned without bringing charges against them, the issue is not tactical aspects of criminal prosecution, but the basic elements of the rule of law. Those who can admit that they were wrong with their assessment on alleged Iraqi WMD can also admit errors with respect to the treatment of dangerous enemies and correct them without losing resolve in the political and military conflict with this enemy. Only if the mission and the message of the war in Iraq are clear and obvious, will the community of democrats make this

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struggle one of their own."

E. (Iraq) Saddam Trial

1. "Fear"

Wolfgang Gnter Lerch opined in an editorial in center-right Frankfurter Allgemeine (11/29):

"The majority of Iraqis, by no means only the Kurds, want their former oppressor to get his justified sentence after all. But it seems to be increasingly difficult to carry out the trial against him and his closest buddies in an orderly way, because there are only a few lawyers left who want to defend them. After a brief testimony, the trial was postponed to December 5, saying the defendants need more time to find a replacement for the two lawyers who were the targets of attacks.. In view of those incidents, Iraqi lawyers are not striving to take over this job. Saddam Hussein, who turned Iraq into a 'Republic of Fear,' and his accomplices are now profiting from the fact that fear again prevails in Iraq, at least among those who were supposed to defend the despot according to the rule of law. Nevertheless, the majority of Iraqis do not want to give up their wish to put him on trial in Iraq."

F. (Environment) Montreal Summit

1. "Polar Bears Turning Into Bears"

Centrist Der Tagesspiegel of Berlin (11/29) opined:

"The Montreal conference must take a first step to the post-Kyoto period. The emission of carbon dioxides must be dramatically lowered if the two-degree-increase in average temperatures is not to be reached. In this respect those who caused the problems, the industrialized nations, must lead the way. Only if the ones who caused the problem do something to save the climate, will rapidly growing countries such as China and India be willing to commit themselves to reducing greenhouse gases, too. If they do not succeed, parts of the globe will soon become uninhabitable for our grandchildren."

2. Centrist Mannheimer Morgen (11/29) judged:

"The wealthy industrialized countries do not give a

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damn about their promise to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. This is also true for Germany, which likes to take on a trailblazing role on the international stage. The reason is obvious. We have heard from opinion leaders day after day that, during an economic slack period, there is no money available for the protection of the environment. Unfortunately, economic leaders and politicians do not say that environmental protection is in realty a worthwhile investment. Americans are slowly beginning to realize the fatal mistakes after the destruction of New Orleans. Those who challenge the forces of nature have bad cards even as superpower."

3. Center-right Landeszeitung of Lneburg (11/29) argued:

"Polar bears are likely to be skeptical about efforts of mankind to protect the climate. For years their hunting grounds have melted. If the Montreal Global Climate Conference does not succeed in agreeing on a spectacular climate protection program, the largest predator on earth will become extinct. The industrialized countries will then have failed as models. Chinese and Indians do not want to continue to ride their bikes if they have the chance to ride a car. Maybe the market can settle things when appeals to reason fail. If the right to pollute the environment gets an economic value, the stimulus to save the climate will increase. Innovative technologies and new mindsets are overdue. Otherwise man will follow the polar bear faster than expected."

G. (Chechnya) Elections

1. "Obvious"

Karl Grobe observed in an editorial in left-of-center Frankfurter Rundschau (11/29):

"Russia's President thanked the security bodies for the fact that the elections in Chechnya took place without any disruptions.. All requirements were met and reliable people were put on the most promising lists of all parties. This procedure has always worked in people's democracies. The elections were carefully monitored, and the monitors did not disappoint those who promised aiding and abetting intimidation. Votes were also carefully counted and the mistake to count more votes than voters had to be avoided this time. The result was well-based. In addition to the soldiers' votes the climate of fear and distrust, which was

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spread by the armed gang of Ramsan Kadyrov, resulted in a majority for the Putin party 'Unified Russia.' Putin owes his rise to power to the promise to settle things in Chechnya.. Kadyrov and his gang fulfill this promise. He simply could not lose the elections, but in reality, he does not need this election either."

2. Center-right SQchsische Zeitung of Dresden (11/29) said:

"Protected by 24,000 soldiers and police officers, the parliamentary elections in Chechnya took an overwhelmingly quiet course. But it would ignore reality to consider this evidence of stability in the Caucasian Republic, even though Russia declared the conflict with the separatist to have ended. Violence and fear still prevail in Chechnya. In such a climate there can be no election that deserves the description of being 'democratic' and 'free.' It carries traits of a farce. As far as politics is concerned, Russia could slowly withdraw from Chechnya because it considers its interests to be preserved by Ramsan Kadyrov. The strong man

has the country firmly under his control. The Kremlin allows him to do whatever he wants as long as he does not question Chechnya's affiliation with Russia."

H. (China) Toxic Chemical Spill

1. Petra Aldenrath commented on national radio station Deutschlandfunk of Cologne (11/29):

"China's economy is booming but the boom also has its disastrous effects which are registered only when an accident happens like the one in the Northeastern Chinese city of Harbin.. It is China's ambitious goal to reduce the enormous gap between the rich and the poor and to rise with rapid speed from a developing nation to an industrialized nation. But in this race, environmental restrictions are often ignored. The accident from Harbin is the result of a slipshod construction method.

"China is trying again and again to keep disasters secret.. 70 percent of all rivers are contaminated, seven of the ten worst polluted cities in the world are in China. And the numerous accidents are not coming to an end.. While China's environmental agencies are confining themselves to administering the disaster, the mega accident in the petrochemical plant in Jilin has now made the world prick

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its ears. It could be that the international community will look more often to China in the future. By 2020, 30 new nuclear power plants are planned in the Middle Kingdom. We can only hope that all safety measures are met and that we will not face nasty surprises."

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